

Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History

Volume 11. South and East Asia, Africa and
the Americas (1600-1700)

Edited by
David Thomas and John Chesworth
with Clinton Bennett, Lejla Demiri,
Martha Frederiks, Stanisław Grodź, Douglas Pratt



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2017

CONTENTS

Foreword	vii
List of Illustrations	xi
List of Maps	xiii
Abbreviations	xiv
Peter Riddell, <i>Introduction: Christian-Muslim Relations in the 17th Century (Asia, Africa and the Americas)</i>	1
Barbara Watson Andaya, <i>Islam and Christianity in South-East Asia 1600-1700</i>	15
Martha Frederiks, <i>Enforced migration: an Indian Ocean Africa narrative</i>	29
David D. Grafton, <i>Enforced migration: an Atlantic narrative in Christian-Muslim relations</i>	49
Works on Christian-Muslim relations 1600-1700	69
South Asia	71
South-East Asia, China and Japan	269
Africa and the Americas	467
Index of Names	623
Index of Titles	632

Manuel Álvares

DATE OF BIRTH	Unknown (second half of the 16 th century)
PLACE OF BIRTH	Portugal
DATE OF DEATH	1616 or 1617
PLACE OF DEATH	Sierra Leone

BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about Manuel Álvares before his arrival in Guinea in 1607. Paul Hair, basing his information on Sommervogel, states that Álvares was born in 1573 in Alter de Chão and entered the Jesuit novitiate in 1590 (Hair, *Interim translation*, introduction). Tiego Mota, however, maintains that Hair is confusing the Guinea missionary Álvares with a namesake who taught theology and philosophy in Evora and lived from 1572 to 1665. According to Mota, the Manuel Álvares who worked in Guinea was born in 1580 in Torres Novas and entered the Jesuit order in 1604 (Mota, 'A missão jesuíta', p. 140). As Manuel Álvares was a common name (there was at least one other Jesuit contemporary of that name, who achieved fame as an educator and Latinist), and since the sources are fragmentary and Álvares himself does not give information about his personal life before his arrival in Guinea, details about Álvares' early life must be regarded as obscure.

In February 1607, Álvares arrived in Santiago, the largest of the Cape Verde Islands. Together with the superior of the mission, Fr Manoel de Almeida, and a third member, Fr Pedro Neto Alvarez, he travelled to the mainland and arrived in the Rio Grande region in March 1607 (du Jarric, *Troisiesme partie*, p. 404). After a brief stay in Bissau and Santa Cruz, Álvares continued his journey to join the already elderly Fr Baltasar Barreira in Sierra Leone. Arriving around August 1607, he worked alongside Barreira in Sierra Leone for some months; the latter then left for Santiago in 1608.

Apart from a brief visit by a fellow Jesuit in 1609 and an encounter with one or two Augustinian 'rival-missionaries' around 1613 or 1614, Álvares worked alone. What we know about him and his work comes from his own writings, consisting of a few letters, some annual reports and his manuscript *Ethiopia Menor e descripcao geographica da Provincia*

da Serra Leoa. Álvares died in 1616 or 1617 in Sierra Leone. The circumstances of his death and the location of his grave are unknown.

After Álvares' death, the Jesuit mission to Sierra Leone was discontinued. According to a letter written by Fr Sebastião Gomes to the Jesuit provincial in 1617, this was partly because of the high mortality rate amongst Jesuit missionaries, and partly because the captaincy of Sierra Leone was in the hands of Pedro Álvares Pereira, who distrusted the Jesuits (Teixeira da Mota and Hair, *Jesuit documents*, no. 48 [ARSI, lus. 74, fols 141-3]). For a number of years, the Jesuits continued to work in the Cacheu region and in Santiago. In 1642, the Jesuit mission to the Cape Verde Islands and the Guinea of Cape Verde closed down permanently (Teixeira da Mota and Hair, *Jesuit documents*, introduction).

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary

- F. Guerreiro, *Relaçam annal das cousas que fezeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus*, Lisbon, 1609, vol. 4
- P. du Jarric, *Troisiesme partie de l'histoire des choses plus memorables*, Bordeaux, 1614, 375-466 (chs 45-52, 'Quelques Peres de la Compagnie de Jesus sont envoyez aux Iles du cap verd et à la terre ferme de la Guinée')
- A. Teixeira da Mota (ed.) and P.E.H. Hair (trans.), *Jesuit documents on the Guinea of Cape Verde and the Cape Verde Islands 1585-1617 in English translation*, Liverpool, 1989 (not formally published)
- P.E.H. Hair, *An interim translation of Manuel Álvares S.J., Ethiópia Menor e descripção geográfica da Província da Serra Leoa*, issued by the Department of History, University of Liverpool, 30 September 1990 (typed manuscript, no page numbers); African Studies Collection, University of Wisconsin: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/AfricanStudies.Alvares01>

Secondary

- T.H. Mota, 'A missão jesuíta de Cabo Verde e o islamismo na Guiné (1607-1616)', *Temporalidades. Revista Discente do Programa de Pós-Graduação em História da UFMG* 5 (2013) 137-60
- J. Kenny, *The Catholic Church in tropical Africa 1445-1850*, Ibadan, 1982
- A.P. Kup, 'Jesuit and Capuchin missions of the seventeenth century', *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion* 5 (1963) 68-72
- M.J. Bane, *Catholic pioneers in West Africa*, Dublin, 1956
- C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*, Brussels, vol. 1, 1890, col. 219; vol. 8, 1898, col. 1615

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Ethiopia Menor e descripção geográfica da Província da Serra Leoa, 'Ethiopia Minor and a geographical account of the Province of Sierra Leone'

DATE Around 1615

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Portuguese

DESCRIPTION

Ethiopia Menor e descripção geográfica da Província da Serra Leoa is a work of about 90,000 words, divided into two parts. Part I gives a description of 'the province and kingdom of the Jalofo heathen and other peoples of the coast northwest of Sierra Leone', while Part II, which is longer, focusses on the 'province of Sierra Leone'.

According to his 'Prologue to the reader', Álvares supplemented his personal observations with information he gathered from 'various friends who are as experienced and knowledgeable in relation to the subject as they are truthful'. Despite this claim of reliability, he hastens to caution his reader, stating that his material on Sierra Leone might be 'sounder' than his text on the areas he did not visit personally.

From the information presented, it is evident that Álvares had a wide variety of informants from diverse backgrounds: it can be inferred that they included Portuguese colonists, diocesan clergy, traders and local converts, who informed Álvares about subjects related to local geography and history, as well as culture and religion.

Part I of *Ethiopia Menor* consists of a series of chapters that briefly discuss the various ethnic groups of the Upper Guinea coast, north of Sierra Leone, outlining their history, political and social organisation and religion, as well as their main sources of livelihood.

Part II is structured thematically and is composed of rich ethnographic material about the Sierra Leone region, discussing subjects such as initiation rituals, ancestor veneration, warfare, marriage customs, burial rites, 'secret' societies such as the Poro and the Bundu, the Mane invasion, their ritual cannibalism and 'character of the natives'. Part II also includes two chapters on the progress of Christianity in the Sierra Leone estuary.

It seems that at some point Álvares considered the manuscript to be more or less complete, because he prepared a prologue and a dedication, while still working on the footnotes. The latter were never finalised,

however, possibly because Álvares fell ill. From the dedication, Paul Hair estimates that the manuscript reached its present form around 1615. There are no records that Álvares himself sent his work to Portugal and it is unclear how the manuscript reached Lisbon. Perhaps one of the Portuguese residents sent it to Portugal after Álvares' death. That would explain why the manuscript ended up in a secular rather than a Jesuit archive.

Álvares' work has never been published; there is no annotated Portuguese edition. A project started by Avelino Teixeira da Mota and Paul Hair in 1969 to work on a critical edition and English translation was never realised due to Teixeira da Mota's death. Hair did eventually make a draft translation (still full of handwritten notes). This typed manuscript is available through the Africana Digitalization Project of the University of Wisconsin, but the text has not been published.

In Part I, Álvares provides elaborate descriptions of Islam in the Senegambia region, paying specific attention to Islam among the Wolof and to the Mandinka or Mande traders. He describes the influence of Muslim scholars on political life in West Africa and how they expanded this influence by spreading literacy through qur'anic schools. In addition, he gives detailed descriptions of the rituals of Muslim life, describing, for example, the *ṣalāt* and burial rituals, Muslim festivals and the significance of the *ḥajj*. Quite unique is his detailed portrayal of Muslim hierarchy in West Africa in the early 17th century (distinguishing between *alemanes*, *fodiges* and *mozés/bexirin*). Álvares also describes the Mande in great detail, relating how they form a close-knit community of families, intermarrying and spreading Islam through trade, education, the manufacture of amulets and the performance of rituals such as rain-making and healing. The tone in Part I is strongly polemical. Álvares depicts the *bexirin* as spongers and tricksters, who feed on the gullible and exploit their influence with the chiefs. He speaks of the *bexirin* as representatives of the devil and of Islam as a 'poisonous sect'.

Part II only makes fleeting references to Islam and Muslims and seems to focus mainly on traditional religiosity. A sentence such as 'the Souso were beginning to drink the milk of the Mohammedan sect' (Part II, Chapter 'The province of the Souso') may lead to the conclusion that, in the Sierra Leone estuary in the early 17th century, Islam had only just begun to spread. However, the material of Álvares' predecessor Baltasar Barreira, who worked in the same areas a decade earlier, does not seem to substantiate this. Barreira in his writings depicts Jesuit missionary

work in Sierra Leone as an uphill competition with Islam for the soul of Africa; according to his letters and reports, he had a number of personal hostile encounters with Muslim clerics.

Remarkably, Álvares' only account of a personal encounter with a Muslim scholar suggests a friendly atmosphere. In chapter 26, 'Discussion of the progress of Christianity', Álvares relates that he met a travelling Muslim cleric with whom he sat for some time and exchanged ideas. He concludes his account of the encounter with the words: 'Then we made an agreement to become close friends until he decided to become my brother by professing the same religion.'

SIGNIFICANCE

It remains unclear why Barreira's and Álvares' accounts diverge so much with regard to their descriptions and assessments of Islam and Muslims in the Sierra Leone region. It is also unclear why Álvares pays so much attention to Islam and in such a polemical tone in Part I of his *Ethiopia Menor* and why this is virtually absent in Part II. Both matters require further research.

PUBLICATIONS

MS Lisbon, Biblioteca da Sociedade de Geógrafia de Lisboa – 141-C-I (about 1615)

MS Lisbon, Biblioteca da Sociedade de Geógrafia de Lisboa – Res. 3 E-7 (about 1615)

Hair, *An interim translation of Manuel Álvares S.J., Ethiopia Menor e descripção geográfica da Província da Serra Leoa* (English trans.); African Studies Collection, University of Wisconsin; <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/AfricanStudies.Alvares01>

P.E.H. Hair, 'Sources on early Sierra Leone. (17) Alvares at Mitombo, 1611', *Africana Research Bulletin* 11 (1980/1) 92-140 (Hair notes that Leon Bourdon produced a French translation of Part II of *Ethiopia Menor*, but does not provide a reference; the catalogues consulted give no information as to where this translation might be published)

STUDIES

Mota, 'A missão jesuíta de Cabo Verde'

V.S. Santon, 'Bexerins e jesuítas. Religião e comércio na Costa da Guiné (século XVII)', *Métis. História e Cultura* 19 (2011) 187-213

Martha Frederiks